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Sonoma County
Oral History Series

Charles Scalione

Interviewed by
Joseph Vercelli

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Interviewed by Joseph Vercelli

August 1982

Transcription 1993

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Introduction to Charles Scalione

This interview with Charles Scalione covers a rarely presented view of the wine industry, one from the technical mechanical side. Because of his love of machinery and the technical aspects of life, combined with his precise attention to detail, Charles is able to expose us to the interworkings of pre and post-Prohibition wineries. Through his long relationship with Healdsburg Machine Shop, he was acquainted with and supplied the vast majority of wineries in Sonoma County, many of which he talks about in this interview.

Michael Scalione, his father, started a vineyard on Brooks Road near the town of Windsor. Due to the haphazard and inconsistent nature of shipping and selling grapes during Prohibition, they eventually added a winery, Alta Loma, about 1934. There Charles learned first hand the limitations of mutton tallow as a sealant.

Having kept memorabilia and reports from the *beginning*, Charles is able to quote prices, tonnage, varieties, percentage sugar and so on...with abandon. He talks in intimate detail of the winery operations from nuts and bolts to pounds of pomace produced—it is all fascinating!

Gail Ryan

This oral history is one in a series of interviews undertaken in the early 1980's by Joseph Vercelli and "Puch" Pucilowski.

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Charles Scalione

Healdsburg Machine Shop

Interviewed by Joseph Vercelli
August 13, 1982

Transcription by Gail Ryan, Healdsburg August 1993

Joseph Vercelli: Charlie what I'd like to do very much is to get your experiences in the wine industry. We'd like you to start with how you got into the industry and perhaps a little background on your father and from whence he came in Italy, a little genealogical background, how many children were in his family and what not.

Let's start: this is Charlie Scalione in a meeting with Pucilowski, we are in Charlie's office on Foss Street in Healdsburg. Charlie first tell us when you started and what brought you into the industry—

Charles Scalione: I started in when we were on the ranch in Windsor. We had a 160 acres, it was on Brooks Road and about two and half miles off the Highway from Windsor, the 101 Highway.

Vercelli: Describe the land, I have a vivid recollection.

Scalione: Well, the land, all rolling hills, very few flat spots. We planted 30 to 40 acres of new vineyards on the top hills the highest vineyards.

Vercelli: Do you remember the variety?

Scalione: The variety was Carignane, Zinfandel and Petit Sarah [Petite Sirah], being that those were the three main varieties of grapes at that time in 1934-35-36.

Vercelli: Was there vineyard on the land before you planted?

Scalione: No, it was all bare land. We pulled stumps, dynamited stumps, then we had it all plowed up and we had old Italians that did the squaring off to plant the stakes, it was something new, they had a chain with little round buttons, 8 X 8 we planted our vineyards. They had to follow the contour of the mountain so they would always stay 8 X 8. That was a trick. On the top of the mountains where the ground was harder we had to dynamite holes. We put a bar in it and loosened the ground up and put in a quarter stick of dynamite and opened up the hole. And the vineyard—every hole that was dynamited grew beautifully in that sandstone. That is that.

The reason we went into the winery business, was that we could never find anyone to buy our grapes. One year we sent our grapes back East,

and we had to pay the freight! Besides growing it and everything else, we were billed for freight.

Vercelli: Out of pocket money.

Scalione: San Francisco market was very poor, it was glutted, there were too many grapes. [Goes through piles of records]

Puch: What year was this?

Scalione: In 1930, we had 50 ton of grapes. The average price was $25 a ton. In 1931, an early frost damaged the crop, 46 tons of grapes average price was $23 a ton, net sales $917 after the cost of picking.

Vercelli: How many acres of land did you have to produce that, Charlie? I'm trying to get a yield per acre.

Scalione: Well, yield per acre was not over a ton and a half. 1932 we got 64 tons of grapes, the cost of picking was $250 and average price of Zinfandels was $17 a ton, average price of Alicante was $9 a ton. 1933, an early frost damaged the crop again, but Repeal of the 18th Amendment, sold to the Healdsburg Wine Company at $42.50 a ton, we got 45 tons a grape. In 1934 prices went down again. From $12.50 to $17 a ton, we had 101 ton and we crushed it to make wine. That when I started to make wine, in 1934, I made 15,994 gallons of wine. The cost of picking it were three men at $25 a month was $125. In 1935, prices were from $12.50 and $15, 110 tons of grapes crushed into dry wine, 16,000 gallons. Paid 6¢ a box to pick them.

Puch: That's neat to have those kinds of records.

Vercelli: I'll get pictures of all this when we are ready.

Scalione: In 1936, frost hit in the Spring, that's when we really got it. Prices from $18 to $20 a ton, 73 tons of grape crushed into wine, produced 10,000 gallons of wine, cost of picking, hauling and making wine was $150.

In 1935, (this is where you come in,) in 1935, wine sales, sold to Scatena Brothers at 10¢ a gallon. Total sales $1412. In 1936, sold to Scatena Brothers 500 gallons of white wine 13¢ a gallon, Martini Wine Company 13,000 gallons, (for some reason I didn't put the price, but you could subtract from the total) total sales were $2313.

Puch: Was that good money for you at that time?

Scalione: No, you couldn't live.

Vercelli: You couldn't even pay taxes on it.

Charlie, what did you name your winery?

Scalione: Alta Loma Winery.

Vercelli: Where did you get the name Alta Loma?

Scalione: Alta because it was on high land it was on the rolling hills and it was really up high and we must have been fortunate and been in a warm belt, because the grapes would mature earlier than the ones of the farmer next to me—

Vercelli: What was the name of the farmer next to you?

Scalione: New England Farms and Perelli-Minetti was on the other side of us—

Vercelli: The other side of the hill—

Scalione: —which is now the Balverne Vineyards.

Vercelli: So I learned. The Passalacquas held the mortgage on that of $30,000 and they took that over in 1936.

Scalione: I also made wine from my neighbors there, I bought my neighbors grapes. Here's an agreement I made with Mr. Richards, Alta Loma Winery hereby agrees to give 90 gallons of wine for a ton of grapes. Mr. Richards delivered me 15 and a half tons of grapes at 90 gallons and I paid him—he had 1395 gallons to be paid when sold. I sold it at 10¢ a gallon and I gave him $139.50, for 15 tons of grape.

Vercelli: That's interesting.

Scalione: Here's another one of 1934, Mr. Verbelli at 9¢ a gallon. Where's the fermenting data. September the 18th, we crushed 197 boxes of grapes, 9850 pounds of grapes, 27.5 % sugar.

Puch: Wow, 27!

Scalione: We started on the 18th to crush at 27.5%, on the 19th it was 29, here's where it got stuck, on the 20th it went down to 20% and on the 21st 19, the 22nd to 15, 22nd again I took it, it was 9% and on the 23 it was 5% and on the 24th it was 5%. Note: I added H_2O, 120 gallons, not enough, stopped fermentation at 5%. Wine was refermented. Grapes from the old hill and top orchards vineyards wine produced 716 gallons, pomace 1933 pounds.

Puch: That's amazing, that really is neat.

Scalione: Look at the form—

Vercelli: Yes, he got it out of Cruess' Handbook.

Puch: You should try to make copies of that, just to have them for records. That's the type of stuff that should go into a museum.

Scalione: And they say that the wine today—this was wine! You'll admit it.

Vercelli: Sure, sure.

Scalione: The only thing they [added chemically] was metabisulfate. This was all the grapes I had, Zinfandels, Petit Sarah's, that we mixed together. Here's another one, the sugar test of 24% in October. I crushed it on the 12th, at 24% on the 13th it went down to 20%, on the 14th to 19%, on the 15th it was down to 10%, the 16th it was down to 7% and the 17th it was down to 2% and on the 18th it was zero.

Wine pumped into the storage tank, that was when I added H_2O to correct the sugar test.

Vercelli: Is the vineyard there today?

Scalione: Some of it is still there. I don't know who owns the property.

Vercelli: Who did you sell the property to?

Scalione: To Mazzetti, and he ran the winery for a little while. And then he gave up.

Puch: Is the building still standing?

Scalione: It is still standing, it's all ruined, but it's still standing. It was a converted barn.

Vercelli: Tell us about the winery. Tell us about the acquisition of the tank, the tanks that you had mentioned to me that were up at Paxton's was it?

Scalione: Another reason we started the winery, my dad being in the machine shop, being in wine manufacturing company, manufactured nothing but wine machinery. He had acquired the three partners when Madrona Vineyards sold their winery interest, Healdsburg Machine Shop acquired it. There were oak casks in there and they divided the oak casks between the three partnerships. Mr. Ferrero got 1/3 of the oak casks, and I think they are still up at his winery, the Soda Rock Winery. I'd like to go up there an take a look at them, I believe that it is one of them. My dad, Mr. Scalione, got his share out of it, and Mr. Rafanelli got his share out of it. But Mr. Rafanelli had no place to put them, so he sold the bigger ones between Ferrari and Scalione, and my dad had this big barn and we set them up there and they stayed there. They were almost on the verge of going spoiled, you know, moldy. But he kept good care of them and they were nice.

Vercelli: What do you think happened to them, converted into firewood? To whom did Mazzetti sell to?

Scalione: I don't know who Mazzetti sold it to, I don't know what happened to all the rest of the equipment that was in there.

In the meantime, when the grapes got down to these low prices, 1934 or there abouts, we decided to crush our own grapes. So we got interested in the Windler in Oakland that was making tanks and we bought three, I think we bought six fermenting tanks, all knocked

down. There were six of them, 3000 gallons a piece, and we bought two large storage tanks, 6000, I don't remember if we had two or three of the 6000 gallon storage tanks. And we had one or two 3000 [gallon], and we have five 1000 oak casks, so when we racked our wine we had coming down and sealing it off.

Vercelli: Do you have any government records—like the 698's? Because you saved everything, I thought you might have a 698?

Scalione: I'm so sorry I haven't got a label, a government form, I might have had them, but—

Vercelli: When you say a label—did you bottle a little wine?

Scalione: I bottled a little wine and I sold wine in bulk to the Black and White market in Santa Rosa.

Vercelli: Ray, what was his name?

Scalione: Ray Santerini.

Vercelli: And he was the son-in-law of—

Scalione: Romeo Cerri.

Vercelli: Wait a minute, and Romeo Cerri got his start in Healdsburg?

Scalione: Right. He had a grocery store that he started in Healdsburg.

Vercelli: Where?

Scalione: On West Street, he started on West Street which the building is now where the Union Oil station is now in Healdsburg.

Vercelli: On that corner?

Scalione: No. There was a little house there right along side the Healdsburg Machine Shop.

Vercelli: The house where Harry Belli used to live on Piper?

Scalione: No.

Vercelli: Okay, on West Street.

Scalione: Where the present sporting goods shop next to the machine shop is now [street is presently called Healdsburg Ave.] He started his grocery store, from there he got bigger and built the building right here (points out location across street). Not the blue one, the cement one, right where Montgomery Ward is now.

Vercelli: I see, there's a building between, wasn't that a Safeway store at one time?

Scalione: After he went belly up after the crash of 1929, Romeo Cerri had all his money invested in Transamerican. And he lost everything, he lost his grocery store, he lost his warehouse and he lost his home.

Vercelli: And his warehouse is the one you have acquired?

Scalione: No, I didn't acquire it, the Healdsburg Machine Shop put it up for him, that's where he was shipping grapes. During the Bootlegging days he was getting raw sugar—

We're jumping around.

Vercelli: That's interesting because it's part of the whole picture.

Scalione: It all ties in with the times.

So I was selling bulk wine to the Black and White Market, he in turn would set it up on the rack and people would come in with their gallon jugs, it was about 35¢ a gallon for their jugs. And that's what they should do today, again. But they're not doing it, too much red tape.

Vercelli: Bureaucracy.

Scalione: Let's go back to the winery. We put up our tanks. We had Mr. Bellagio erect all the tanks, I helped him.

Puch: Were they redwood?

Scalione: All redwood. He put all our tanks up, the fermenting tanks, I helped him. I had them all linseed oiled on the outside and the hoops around them were all painted silver.

Vercelli: I remember.

Scalione: The winery had a dirt floor, and the way we did the crushing—we had a small hand crusher and my father had converted it—it had an electric motor. And we would set the crusher on top of the tank on 2 X 4's and then from off the truck, we had a Model T truck. We'd take grapes out of the boxes and dump them right into the crusher.

Vercelli: You'd drive the truck right up to the crusher?

Scalione: Right into the winery and dump them right into the crusher. The stems and all. On the bottom of the crusher, naturally, we'd have this wooden screen, so that the pomace would be drained out and the pomace wouldn't clog up the faucet. And punched it all down when it was fermenting. When that was done, we'd take the pomace out, we had an pretty good sized press but you had to wind it by hand.

Vercelli: A ratchet press.

Scalione: A ratchet press, double action, a fast speed and a slow speed. You'd go fast until it got too tight and then you'd drop it over and really on compound low pressure.

Vercelli: It was portable?

Scalione: It was on wheels so it would move and get it out of our way so it wouldn't bother us. We also had a old Gould wine pump, that pumped by hand back and forth, had two operators one on one side one on the other. You'd step on the board there, so it wouldn't jump up and down on you, you'd pump by hand. Also, dad converted another old wine pump, and we put a pump jack on it with an electric motor so it would be easier when we pumped 6000 gallons, so that we could pump it faster. We had all piston pumps, no centrifugal pump.

Vercelli: Positive displacement pumps.

Scalione: A centrifugal pump, you know what it does to the wine? It aerates it—

Vercelli: —Churns it up.

Scalione: So we didn't have that. The next year dad got a little bit more, they were making coolers for the wine, so we did get a cooler for our fermentation—a water cooler. They didn't know [much], in 1935-36 it wasn't like it is today with all the refrigeration and ice, you had to depend on water.

Vercelli: Was the cooler made out of copper?

Scalione: Copper, the coils were copper, 3/4 inch copper, the outside pipe was a 3 inch boiler tubing and it had bronze jackets at either end, it was really a heat exchanger. And it did keep the wine cool.

Puch: What temperature did you try to keep the wine at?

Scalione: I really don't remember any more. When you are making wine you have to keep it below—you had to keep it around 60° at least, you didn't want it any higher than 60°. Because during fermentation it would get hot itself, and put a stop on it, if you weren't careful.

Puch: What was the capacity of the winery?

Scalione: Well, I had—crushed 19,000-20,000, it was around about 25,000 gallons. And it was all sold bulk. And the only chemicals I used was Metabisulfate and stick sulfur. When we cleaned out the tanks, we put a pan through the manhole, we put a pan of sulfur in there and then when it got all burnt out, you either leave it there and you corked the top of the tank or you'd leave it in there.

Vercelli: Did you have any unusual experiences when you made wine? Any interesting anecdotes?

Scalione: Oh, yeah. I had one experience that was really an experience. We had just the night before crushed our grapes and we sealed the doors to the cask, you put tallow around the doors to make it tight so that it wouldn't leak. So we put in our tallow and closed the door. We had too much wine, so we filled one of the 1000 gallon casks with warm

wine that we had just taken out of the fermenting tanks, it was still kind of warm. In the morning I was walking up when low and behold there was a whole row of wine down the sides of the road there. "Good God what happened?" Sure enough, I opened up the doors and there was the wine spilling out of that manhole, it had leaked through the tallow and was squirting across the room, the whole 1000 gallons of wine had gone down.

Vercelli: That's interesting Charlie. Of course, you probably used mutton tallow, as it didn't give a flavor. We, in subsequent years, as that was a common occurrence, would cut it down with bee's wax.

Scalione: We did that afterwards.

Vercelli: That was true of most of us, we learnt the hard way.

Scalione: You'd scrape that tallow off and put it in your hand and the warmth of your hand would soften the tallow, then you would put a little bead around it and I guess, I'd either put too much or something that when I pulled it shut it didn't seal right.

Vercelli: The warmth of the wine dissolved it.

Scalione: We had to call up the Internal Revenue, because we had this loss of gallons. They had to know where it went. So they saw it going out there, they chalked it off and that was it.

Vercelli: Talking about the Internal Revenue, what was your relationship with them? Of course, you had done some work in drafting—

Scalione: I had a very good relationship, because I knew Mr. Bennington, who was the chief here in Santa Rosa. He advised me to work with him to make plots and plans for different wineries. The first one I made was for myself, I had to do it and he made me put it on cloth. I had never—I had some training in high school, I took three years of mechanical drawing, which I still have my instruments here.

Puch: Oh my God. [chuckles]

Scalione: You wouldn't believe it huh! [Takes out tools]

Puch: I'll be darn, look at that.

Vercelli: That's 65 years old, Charlie?

Scalione: That's right.

Vercelli: They are still serviceable.

Scalione: Well, he advised that if I would do it him for these wineries that hadn't have anything—he taught me what to do, what he wanted, it was very interesting. I did the Oliveto Wine Company out of town here.

Vercelli: Who ran the Oliveto then?

Scalione: I don't remember his name then, but he was from out of New York.

Vercelli: Albert Vischia, Sonoma Vineyards.

Scalione: Vischia had it. And then I did Rose's winery up in Geyserville.

Vercelli: John Rose.

Scalione: I don't remember if I did Pedroncelli or not. But I did a few of them then I got too busy, and I turned what I was doing to L. A. Hall, Lieuallen Hall, was my buddy from high school and he took it up and did all the wine reports for the wineries and made all the maps for them.

Puch: Is he still living?

Scalione: No, he passed away. He would probably have had everything, he was like I was, kept records of everything. Probably Vivian (Mrs. Hall) would have them, you should talk with her.

Puch: What was your water supply at the winery and also what was your disposal?

Scalione: Well we had—disposal—being that it was just plain water we just let it run right down into the small creek, there was no contamination or anything just plain water, there was nothing in the water. The water supply, we had a well, we were fortunate enough to have plenty of water. We had a tank sitting up on the hill and we had average pressure of 50 pounds. We had over 6000 gallons of water up on the hilltop. We had pretty good lines, dad was hell on that, he always wanted either 2 inch or 1 1/2 inch lines, we had plenty of water.

Puch: Did you have your own label?

Scalione: I had my own label and it was approved.

Vercelli: What was the brand?

Scalione: Alta Loma and we had the Zinfandel and that was about it.

Puch: The Zinfandel was the only one you bottled?

Scalione: Yes, under my label.

Puch: All the other grapes were blended in with the Zin?

Scalione: Yes, that's right. The localities, I would either get it up from the hill and then I would mix it in with the Petite Sirah [pronounced Petit Sarahs]—

Vercelli: You mentioned Charlie that you sold some white wine—what was it do you remember?

Scalione: Golden Chasselas. We had Golden Chasselas, some Burger maybe it was one ton of white Burger and that juice would come out of the boxes galore. But the Golden Chasselas would turn to a beautiful golden color. Then we had some Mission grapes, we had a flat in there, I don't know who planted them that way, but it was mixed up with varietals of grapes that were out of this world. It had Mission, Rose of Peru, people don't even know what it looks like, and it had Burgers and it had Sweetwaters. What we did, what they are doing today, we cut the stumps off and stump grafted all the odd varieties, that was back in 1932 or 1933. We would cut it off at the St. George scion and take off from there. But four scions right on the stump and started them back up with new grapes.

Vercelli: Do you remember how long it took to come back to a full crop?

Scalione: Well, about two to three years.

Puch: Sam Sebastiani just got done doing this to his, and he showed slides and said that it took two years.

Scalione: The other grape we planted took a lot more, about four to five years to get a crop. Because the only fertilizer we ever put on the ground was chicken manure, and that would just last about a year and was gone and we would do it again.

Puch: Where did you sell your own label and how was your marketing?

Scalione: The only marketing was that one little grocery store in Santa Rosa.

Puch: One grocery store?

Scalione: That was it. That was the only thing, the rest of the wine we sold in bulk and it was too much trouble and we just forgot it.

Puch: It would be a pretty rare label wouldn't it, if it only sold in one store!

Vercelli: Okay, Charlie lets go to your neighbors in the area. What do you remember? Let's start with Oliveto. What do you remember about it?

Scalione: Well, the Oliveto, in my memory, it was one of the first wineries that I had, the reason for that it that at home, the foreman that was running the winery, Mr. Ferrari, Abele Ferrari, he was boarding with us in our home there on West Street. My dad had previously worked for the same winery before he went into the machine shop.

Vercelli: What year was that?

Scalione: It must have been, well I was born in 1907 and born there, and he was working in the winery at that time, 1907. I was born on Powell Street there, mom was a cook for the laborers working in the winery. Dad didn't have enough money to buy the wine, so he would have a couple of glasses of wine before he came home to eat, so he would have his wine at the table, and then when he got through eating he would go back to the winery and have another glass of wine.

Vercelli: What part of Italy did your dad come from?

Scalione: My dad came from the Northern part of Italy, the Piedmont area. Him being a machinist there at his young age of 17 or 18, he was an engineer at that time, an engineer in steam, a boiler engineer. He was a mechanic at that time.

Vercelli: What part of Piedmont?

Scalione: Tortona, right in the central part where it is all viticultural country, it is all wine country. Then when he came here 1905, his uncle was superintendent of Madrona Knolls Vineyard.

Vercelli: What was his uncle's name?

Scalione: Tony, Tony Scalione.

Vercelli: He was the son of your grandfather's brother?

Scalione: That's right.

My father had four brothers. He came to American, one of them went to Argentina, the other one in 1910 or 11 came to America and one remained in Italy, which my aunt is still alive.

Vercelli: How old is she?

Scalione: She must be around 90 or so, and she's still in Italy.

Vercelli: The brother that came to America where did he land?

Scalione: Well, they all came to San Francisco. They all came here to Healdsburg. My Uncle Oresta came here and I believe his first job was with Italian Swiss Colony. He has little records of when he was a machinist. He also was a cabinet maker and he turned to pay my father off for the passage which run about $80, he made two large wardrobes, which I still have.

Vercelli: So your father came over first, and then Oresta?

Scalione: My father came over in about 1905, he worked with his Uncle there at Madrona Knoll which was all vineyard.

Vercelli: Which was the Paxton Winery.

Scalione: It was the Paxton Ranch at that time.

[Pause to answer phone]

Scalione: Oresta came over in about 1910 or 1911. In 1905 when my dad came over here he had worked long enough, in the meantime, he had left his wife—

Vercelli: He had married in Tortona? (Piedmonte region)

Scalione: Yes, and she was pregnant and she lost her first son through a miscarriage, and he's buried in Italy. When they had enough money, he sent the money over for her passage from Tortona to Genoa to San Francisco, the passage was $80.

Vercelli: She came by boat all the way to San Francisco?

Scalione: All by boat and that was—

Vercelli: That was before the Panama Canal?

Scalione: No, no not by the Panama Canal. You went to New York to Staten Island and they pinned a big ticket on you, and everytime you went someplace they took part of the ticket off, until she landed in San Francisco. From San Francisco she went to work at the Paxton Ranch at the cookhouse. She was the cook for the laborers there at the ranch which was on a little knoll where Dr. Beeson's place now sits on, a little knoll on top of there. The winery was in a little hollow there and the main house was on the other side. And Tony's wife was the housekeeper for the Paxton family. (Madrona Knoll Restaurant and Bed and Breakfast)

Vercelli: Tell us about Tony, he was from the same region as your Dad?

Scalione: Yes, they came from the same region.

Vercelli: Did he have any experience in wine making in Italy before he came?

Scalione: I don't know, dad never said anything about it. They had two boys there, one was Charlie Scalione and one was Theodore Scalione who is still alive. Charlie Scalione graduated from the University of California in 1915.

Vercelli: Ted, his brother, is still alive? Which would be your first cousin?

Scalione: Yes, he's still alive.

Vercelli: How often do you see him, I never knew that you had a first cousin named Ted?

Scalione: Oh, I see him. And he has a son too.

Vercelli: What does he do, Charlie?

Scalione: He was a postman and he's in real estate, he's quite a character.

Vercelli: Let's get back to Oliveto—Who owned Oliveto at that time?

Scalione: At that time Oliveto was owned by Gardini and Franceschini, and Franceschini was the superintendent or manager of the winery and—Ferrari was the wine maker.

Vercelli: Did Abele have any experience in Italy?

Scalione: He was a viticulturist.

Vercelli: He was trained.

Scalione: He went to viticulturist school and I still have his books on work he did in 1889, I believe.

Vercelli: That's interesting.

Scalione: I'll show then to you sometime. I don't know where I've got them, there are in a box somewhere.

Vercelli: When you run across them, give me a call.

Scalione: They are beautifully written, in handwriting, long hand. What writing, today anyone would envy ability to write like that, we don't write like that anymore, it's beautiful.

Puch: What's the book about?

Scalione: His experiences going to school, all about the Phylloxera—he was ahead of his time.

Puch: That could be published nowadays.

Scalione: He has notes in there that are out of this world. I have three books of his. How I got a hold of them? He gave them to me and I've kept them all these years. It's really amazing.

Getting back to the Oliveto Winery, being that he was living with us I would go there after school to get pin money. I would probably get 10 to 15 cents to paint the hoops on the barrels that were shipped back East. Gardini and Franceschini had a branch office in New York and they would ship bulk wine in box cars, tax paid to their place in the East.

I would like to go in that winery again, I just saw it open the other day. I want to go in it because if I close my eyes and walk down those steps I can still see the barrels lined up in a row there, going out the back with a [train] car back in there, run it up the ramp because they were two tiers high. They had one tier up on ends and then they put 2 X 4's and they put another tier up on that. Two tiers then braced so they wouldn't break.

Vercelli: When were you last in the winery?

Scalione: It's been a long time.

Vercelli: They've removed the second floor.

Scalione: The second floor of that winery was really unique, it had the fermenting room. By the way, all the equipment from there was

Healdsburg Machine Company equipment, the crusher, the must pumps and all the pumps that had to pump the wine to the top to the fermenting tanks. And all the wine would be drawn right below. It didn't need any pumps. The only pumps they needed were downstairs. That winery's unique in that the walls have an air space in between them, they are two feet thick, all brick, with an air space in between. That winery's cool as a cucumber. Another thing about that winery. I used to go in there, I was as a little kid I was half mechanically minded, I would go around the back end where Ricci was the Cooper there that would fix all the barrels that came back busted, he would put new staves or make barrels. I used to go back in there and watch him assembling it, putting them together, cleaning them, steaming them, I did that too. We had a boiler in there and we put jets of steam in the barrel to wash it out. Then we would put salsoda and clean them all out.

Vercelli: They had enough work for Ricci as a cooper to keep him fully employed?

Scalione: Fully employed.

Vercelli: Of course, that was the Ricci that subsequently bought the property.

Scalione: Yes, that's still there with nothing on it. Which is behind that property of Ricci's there, is an old stone quarry that used to cut blocks for San Francisco.

Vercelli: Yes, I've seen it.

Getting back—you talked of Gardini and Lorenzini, Franceschini, how did Franceschini come in? First it was Gardini and Lorenchini?

Scalione: They in turn would buy their grapes from the Frei Ranch. The Frei Ranch I believe, if I'm not mistaken, Lorenzini could have been on the Frei Ranch, I don't know. They put the winery up around 1910, or sooner when that winery was built. I think Lorenzini came to the winery—[According to the historical volume *Sonoma County* published in 1911, Lorenzini and Gardini had a winery dating from 1895, this wooden structure was replaced by the existing rock winery after Franceschini became involved.]

Vercelli: The Frei Winery was built in 1910—

Scalione: No, the winery up there [Oliveto]—

Vercelli: They were selling grapes.

Scalione: They were selling all the grapes there. The winery, I think, up there was built during Prohibition. When everybody went to pot.

Vercelli: The Frei Brothers Winery was built—you think—I have to get a hold of Tom or Andy Frei.

Scalione: Sargentis used to be up there. Two Sargenti brothers, one had his leg cut off. One of them was working as foreman at Frei Brothers, up on top of the hill with the big cook house. And the Sargentis used to be, the reason I know is because when I was in Druids, he was secretary and I think I took his job over, I was about 20 years old, 21. I was secretary of the Druids at that time, lets get back to the winery business.

Vercelli: Tell us more of what you know about Oliveto. When did they sell to LeBaron?

Scalione: Well, the Oliveto stayed like that for a long time. They also had a pomace still that I loved to watch.

Vercelli: A pot still.

Scalione: A pot still to make brandy. And the gauger was always there, in fact, at one time I had a whole set of gauges, hydrometers. But I foolishly gave mine to Gallo Winery. I gave it to Julio Gallo, when they were making wine down there. I told Julio that I had these and he said, "Will you bring them down here?" I gave it to him. It was a little box with all the gauges, I have one left here yet.

Puch: I wonder if he still has them, or if he threw them out?

Scalione: He probably still has them. Julio's another one [that saves everything].

Vercelli: When did you see him last?

Scalione: I haven't seen him in 30 years. I'm going to go down there and make a date with him and I'm going to see them.

Vercelli: I'll find out when he comes up here. I'll find out when he comes up and we'll go to lunch.

Scalione: I want to see him.

Vercelli: Yes.

Scalione: He used to kid me, oh!

Vercelli: He comes up frequently on his helicopter. He doesn't like to go to a restaurant. So they have a little kitchen out there and they buy a little salami and what not they do their eating out there. They used to go to the Rex [in Geyserville], they visited Souverain and I had seen Julio's son, Bob frequently at Souverain. But he told me the last time I had seen him, that is now two years since I have seen him, he told me the fact that they have a little kitchen there that they make their little meals in.

Scalione: I would love to see him again.

Vercelli: I'll make a note.

Scalione: Even though him and I don't know each other very well, but we did start—I remember him when he had nothing, absolutely nothing. A little office no bigger than this.

Puch: Is that right. That would be really interesting.

Scalione: That's right.

Him and I, oh, he would kid me right along, we would go—he was intelligent, he saw the picture on the wall and started buying big farms right off the bat. A lot of ranches around Livingston, they were all grain fields at the time. When I'd get through with work, he'd say, "Come on!" We'd get his pick-up and go rabbit hunting, with a pick-up.

Puch: And he started picking up properties, he was pretty smart then?

Scalione: Oh, he saw the writing on the wall. He was the type of man that had Cahill make his first concrete tanks, the next year, Julio was making the concrete tanks.

Puch: They always like to do it themselves, they do that even to this day.

Scalione: Is his right-hand man still in there, that was making wine?

Vercelli: Crawford.

Scalione: Crawford, yes.

Puch: Charlie Crawford.

Scalione: He picked up—I remember when he got him at Davis.

Vercelli: He came from the Taylor Wine Company. Charlie went from Davis to Taylor then he came to Gallo.

Scalione: Because he picked him up there—and he's still there?

Puch: He's still there. He picked him up as his wine maker.

Scalione: Right. I knew Mr. Cella, too, at the Roma Wine Company. J.B. himself.

Puch: When do you think was the big turn around? When did Gallo become popular or became a big name, when their volume really start to go up?

Scalione: Well, being the Ernest was a good financial man, Julio a good construction man and had—he could see ahead. He saw, he saw way ahead of things. He saw the future of the winery. He saw that it was hard to get grapes from the growers, they were always not wanting to sell. He had sense enough to buy grapes like that. Also, he got wineries to make wine for him and he would finance them. He was very liberal and he was an honest man.

Vercelli: To answer Puch's question, I think the Second World War made them. That's when they really started to go into the bottling of wine.

Scalione: Not even that. He was always on the go. Where the other fellas, like Roma, either had too much interference or the other one, the Eastside Winery had a bunch of co-ops got in there. But he was always pushing ahead. He was a go-getter, let's face it.

Puch: More than Ernest?

Scalione: Yes. Ernest was the guy that had the financial end of it, he'd see that there was plenty of money around for Julio to operate on.

Puch: Where did they get their money? How did they get money?

Scalione: They were very economical workers. In other words, the economy was their password, lets put it that way. He would not waste a nickel, he would not waste a piece of lumber, he would not waste nothing. Everything was usable. And that is the secret.

End of Side One

Restarts in conversation:

Vercelli: Thanks to the Gallo's, being that we had Prorate, they had all this brandy. The name of the game at the time was sweet. So they bought all this brandy from the State of California, very, very old crushed. Then you had the transition from bulk to taste [hammering in background]. During that transition they had the raw materials, which they paid little for. Then during the War years—'42, we entered the War in about 1941. From about '42 on, they made alcohol, they converted their fruit distillery to an alcohol distillery. And it was subsidized by the Federal Government, the molasses that they imported and the other products, so the main alcohol on a cost plus basis, that really started to take off.

But that's not detracting from their abilities. They were the best marketers and that is it.

Puch: They really were good marketers?

Scalione: They were.

Puch: Like you were saying, his vision.

Scalione: You can see what he has done. He has his glass factory there now, doesn't he? He's built up his building, but he hasn't gone over board. He was limited, just went so far, and that was it. He kept up with new ideas—

Vercelli: A lot of experimentation. They had the best research department. They have always believed in research. They probably spend $10 million a

year on research, the next one is UV, the United Vintners is maybe a million, a million and a half, two million.

We'll let the present generation tell their history. Let's get back to Leorenchini and Gardini when they were in the business, and how LeBaron got in it and how long he was in it.

Scalione: Prohibition, I believe that is when LeBaron bought in with—Franchinsini and Gardini were getting up in age and they didn't want nothing to do with it any more. So Ferrero was in there and he asked Abele if anyone would like to buy it with him. Well, he got ahold of LeBaron, they had a ranch out on Dry Creek.

Vercelli: Vineyards?

Scalione: All vineyards in Dry Creek, they had vineyards and also had prunes, prunes and vineyards. And LeBaron, he was an old cowhand, cow puncher, he always had cowboy boots. And he was another go-getter, he had ranches in Turlock and his kids were all the same as he was.

Vercelli: Do you remember any of the children? Name the ones you know.

Scalione: Henry LeBaron, Paul LeBaron—

Vercelli: Wait. Let's start with Henry LeBaron.

Scalione: He was the oldest—

Vercelli: Henry was the oldest, and he was the one that had the creamery here in 1936?

Scalione: Right.

Vercelli: Then he moved into the valley.

Scalione: No, Henry never moved into the valley.

Vercelli: Where did he move to?

Scalione: He stayed here.

Vercelli: Then who was the one that had the creamery?

Scalione: Jim was the one that moved to the valley.

Vercelli: Then Jim had the creamery and the good looking wife, here in Healdsburg.

Scalione: Yes. Then there was Paul and Jim.

Vercelli: The three boys. Who was the football player? Whose the father of the football player?

Scalione: That was Eddie.

Vercelli: Eddie LeBaron is the football player, who fathered him?

Scalione: I don't know, I forget which one. There were the four boys—I forget what his name is.

Vercelli: Then it's the fourth one that you are talking about. It wasn't Paul's son, it wasn't Jim's son—because I don't think Jim had children—

Scalione: No, it was the one in Lodi, he had a ranch in Waterford [Lockeford?]. And he was Eddie LeBaron, the football player's father. I can't remember what his name was, isn't that funny. I went to high school with him too, and I don't remember.

And then a partnership was formed between Abele and LeBaron and they made wine during Prohibition days. They made wine for the Rabbis. They had a Rabbi there so they would make that Sacramental wine to keep going.

Also, he used the winery there as the shipping location, he was buying grapes and shipping them to Santa Rosa. He bought two single trucks with solid rubber tires [Chuckles], wheels, at that time. Then later on he bought pneumatic tires and then when Repeal came, they went back into the wine business.

Vercelli: Did they open up in '33 or '34?

Scalione: Whenever Repeal—being that the winery was still in operation, making a little wine for sacramental purposes, they kept their wine tanks up. They didn't have to go down and get the sour, the tanks were in pretty good shape. They kept them in A-1 condition. Then when Repeal (came), they went into the wine business.

Vercelli: And Abele was still there?

Scalione: He was still there and they went into the wine business, they were kind of bootlegging the wine around, eventually they got caught. They got caught because they were taking the wine out and refilling the tanks with water. There was only about 5% alcohol in them. [Chuckles]

They went to court and there was a big lawsuit and everything else, and they blamed everything on Abele, because he was around then.

Vercelli: Where did Sarfundalaro, Frank, come in?

Scalione: He was just a laborer. But he [Ferrari] got the blame, because he was living there and they blamed him for not watching the winery. That they were taking the wine out at nighttime and running the barrels down the railroad tracks into trucks. That was the truth, that's what they were doing. They were getting all cash money, they were going to San Francisco like wildfire.

Anyway, when that happened, the winery kind of got an off-beat name, Ferrari got disgusted. Meanwhile he was in partnership with my

father on a ranch in Windsor in 1922, so he got out of there and came and stayed on the ranch until he went to Italy.

In the meantime, I believe that's when Vischia came in and bought it from LeBaron.

Vercelli: From LeBaron?

Scalione: I'm not sure, not being in the real estate or nothing else, how that got into there. But Vischia, he must have borrowed the money from Passalacqua, because when he went belly up Edith [Passalacqua] got it.

Vercelli: Yes.

Scalione: I don't know what the connection is that allowed Edith to get in there—

Vercelli: I'm glad you told me that, because Francis [Passalacqua, Edith's brother and a Healdsburg attorney] told me the problems started with Perelli-Minetti, because in 1920, Frank Passalacqua [father of Francis and Edith] loaned $30,000 to the Perelli-Minetti family. And they moved off the ranch when—in 1926-28?

Scalione: Yes, that was Tony Perelli, Tony was down below, that was another one, that was his brother.

Vercelli: Tony was the one that went to Delano? Yes.

Scalione: Delano. This was the other one.

Vercelli: What was his name?

Scalione: Was it Joseph, no.

Vercelli: There was a Julio.

Scalione: There were lots of boys, that's a son.

You'll have to look it up in the records.

Vercelli: I'll find out from Francis.

They had an enologist up there, Julio Perelli-Minetti was the wine maker at Simi, he was consulting—

Scalione: No, that was Tony.

Vercelli: That was Tony?

Scalione: The one that went to Delano.

Vercelli: He just died at 101-102 years old (maybe somewhat younger).

Scalione: He was the one that was working for Montepucchino at that time and built the dam up on top for water, and it's still there. He's the one that started that. Then he left there, married a local Healdsburg girl, Whitney, Whitney the pharmacist's daughter, and moved to Delano. Which his sons are running the winery there. In fact, I installed a crusher down there.

Vercelli: And they just got rid of their holdings now. And that was Tony?

And this one here had three sons.

Scalione: On this ranch, he had Julio, Rodger, and Joe.

Vercelli: There were two Joes.

Scalione: Joe was the oldest.

Vercelli: Joe was the one that wrote the book.

Scalione: Rodger, the second one, was the one I went to school with, that I should have gone to the University of California with there at Davis. He went, I didn't and I would like to kick myself, but I didn't make it. And Julio was the last one, the three boys, and that's it.

Vercelli: I went to school with one of them, and they had the Anglo-California Wine Company and I've got a label someplace of the Anglo-California Wine Company in San Francisco. And Joe went to school with me, he's a veterinarian in Petaluma. I haven't seen him for forty years. Now that you say that, I'll make a point of seeing him.

Scalione: Now wait a minute that's—

Vercelli: There were two Joes. Joe, that is the son of one of the Perelli-Minetti's that wrote the book, that I have someplace, he passed away just recently.

Scalione: That's the one that went to Davis and graduated out of high school here in 1924, he went to Davis. I graduated in 1925 and both Rodger and I were supposed to go there. We had everything planned. But my dad didn't have the money to send me to school, so I didn't make it. That was already planned out, I still have my high school credentials to go to Davis.

Puch: How different your life might have been—

Scalione: That's right. I could have been—they were all State Inspectors, all three work for the State.

Vercelli: So that was the story on Oliveto. You don't remember LeBaron having anything to do with Fruit Industries?

Scalione: No.

Vercelli: There is a vague recollection that he got mixed up with Joe Grace.

What other winery have you had experience around here? What is your experience with Simi, if any Charlie?

Scalione: Not much with Simi, the only one I had more experience with was with the Scatena Brothers, when I was selling my own winery to them.

Vercelli: What do you know about the Scatenas, when did they start? Do you remember the two families before Humbert came into the picture?

Scalione: No, I don't remember, because not being—being just a kid at the time I had no interest.

Vercelli: Had no interest.

Did you have anything else?

Scalione: I knew the wineries that were there, but I was more interested in the cannery business, because we had a cannery sitting behind us here.

Vercelli: Do you have any memory of the Finlayson Winery?

Scalione: I remember the Finlayson Winery, being on that corner, did I tell you about that round thing for the barrel?

Vercelli: Yes, you told me.

Scalione: It's still down there, somebody ought to get that from him and put it in the museum, because that is really something!

Puch: What is it?

Scalione: It's a stencil that you used to put on the barrels, it has Finlayson Winery on it. You should get it.

Vercelli: The real estate man—Dutton—

Scalione: He'd give it to you. You should put it in a museum because that is really something.

Vercelli: Where can I get ahold of Dutton?

Scalione: He lives there. He has a produce stand there. He sells all the produce, haven't you seen the Dutton Produce in the paper?

Vercelli: Yes. That I'll do, I might do it next Friday. I'm going over to Bodega next Friday, I might stop on my way back.

Scalione: Stop in, you'll see it hanging on the wall. He has several things. When I saw that I flipped, because that is really something.

Vercelli: Any other little wineries that you can think of?

Scalione: Well, there was another used to call—

Vercelli: Did you ever hear of Laurel Springs Winery?

Scalione: No. Franco American I've heard of.

Vercelli: Franco American? Tell me about it.

Scalione: It's French.

Vercelli: Oh, French American, Duffy's.

Scalione: Then there was another one, I'm not sure where the winery was located, if it was between where Mrs. Haigh's residence is now [University Street, Healdsburg], and there's another little residence, they are repairing it they're putting underpinnings under it. There was a little alley way, and I'm not sure if there was a winery in there or not.

Vercelli: Across the street [corner Hudson and Front Streets] is where Simi started and from there it went up there [north of Healdsburg]. When did the—French American was across the street, because there was a Cream of tartar company down there in 1900.

Scalione: Then Paserino made a cannery out of it.

Vercelli: Paserino made a cannery out of that winery?

Scalione: That's right. He started off, his first crop was cherries. And he bought cherries. Then he was in the cannery there canning tomatoes. There were about four canneries in Healdsburg, the Healdsburg Canning Company—

Puch: It was a big deal.

Vercelli: Zerrello—

Scalione: Zerrello Packing.

Vercelli: Had Diana brand products.

Scalione: —with the arrow [on their label].

Vercelli: You remember that.

Scalione: Oh, yeah. When he was making tomato paste, I used to put the labels on.

Puch: Some of those labels cost so much money now, they are real antiques.

Scalione: That's another thing I enjoyed. This is off the beat, but I enjoyed in high school, ancient myths.

Vercelli: Mythology.

Scalione: Mythology, I think they should give it to everyone, because that is really—stays in your head forever. Achilles heel, alright remember Achilles heel, it was the only place you could get him was in the heel.

Vercelli: Sure, sure.

Do you remember anything about Grace Cumminsky?

Scalione: Oh, yes. I remember her.

Vercelli: Tell me what you know about Grace.

Scalione: Well, Grace—let's go back. I used to be an altar boy, so Grace Cumminsky used to play the organ in church. Sometimes I had to pump the organ for her. She was a stocky little woman. Her brother had the Cumminsky Winery.

Vercelli: Grace's brother?

Scalione: And he was another that saw way ahead. He had visions. He in fact, in order to protect his vineyards, he put up a great big wall with trays for wind breakers.

Vercelli: What was the brother's name, do you know?

Scalione: Gosh, I don't know what his name was, but he was a wild man. Not a wild man but he—

Vercelli: Was he married?

Scalione: No, he never married. He had Cumminsky Station outside of Cloverdale. He had a swinging bridge because you had to cross the Russian River.

Vercelli: The bridge is still there, it's a suspended bridge. Very interesting.

Scalione: But he had, what was the name of that winery, was it the Sotoyome Winery?

Vercelli: Sotoyome Winery is this one down here. Then Louie [Foppiano] bought that and now a man by the name of Chaffins, Bill Chaffins, has the name up on Limerick Lane.

Do you remember anything about Andrew Sodini? I've got to get him on tape?

Scalione: The only thing I remember about Andy Sodini, was that as I say, it was through my dad, he helped build the winery up there, they were great friends.

Vercelli: But that was after Prohibition, he didn't exist before Prohibition?

Scalione: After Prohibition. No, no.

Vercelli: How about Bacchi?

Scalione: All after Prohibition. I don't know if Del Fava had a winery or not.

Vercelli: Delfava? Incidentally, one of them died recently.

Scalione: The oldest one, I didn't know him. I don't know if Del Fava had one in there or not. Further up was the Azevedo's and they had a dairy.

Vercelli: Do you remember Bill Passalacqua?

Scalione: Yes.

Vercelli: Do you remember his winery?

Scalione: No. But the other winery I do remember, when we had the ranch in Windsor, was the Chisholm Winery.

Vercelli: Yes. She's still alive.

Scalione: Mona.

Vercelli: Is Doug still alive, is he back in Washington?

Scalione: Who?

Vercelli: Doug, Doug Chisholm, Mona's younger brother. He was a high-stepper.

Scalione: He was a high-stepper with Ross Pool.

Vercelli: Who's Ross Pool?

Scalione: Ross Pool, his father is the one that had that great big store in Windsor. This was Ross. He was a high-stepper, along with Douglas, together they were really something.

Vercelli: Doug went back to Washington, he was there for many years. I didn't know if he'd, he was older than I, so perhaps he's your age.

Scalione: He married a Packwood there.

We're getting into ancient history.

Vercelli: How about Bottasso?

Scalione: Bottasso, he bought the New England Farm, from Hagadorn.

Vercelli: Oh.

Scalione: He was a grape shipper, he came from San Francisco.

Vercelli: Bottasso, when did he come into the community?

Scalione: Let's see, I was—we were off the ranch. Probably—

Vercelli: During Prohibition?

Scalione: 1934-35.

Vercelli: After Prohibition.

Scalione: Round about right in there.

Vercelli: And he put up the winery, there was no winery at New England Ranch before that?

Scalione: No winery before that. He bought a ranch in Bennett Valley and put the farm up at Sweetwater, where his son passed away on Bennett Valley Road.

Vercelli: That's where the winery is?

Scalione: That's where the winery is. There was no winery there at all period.

Vercelli: What do you remember about the Perelli-Minettis on the ranch there? Did they always have grape there?

Scalione: No, I believe there wasn't a grape vine on the ranch, it was all apples. He had a lot of apples, apples and hay. The principle thing on the ranch when Perelli-Minetti bought it was all hay. He in turn planted all Gravenstein apples, in fact, he packed them there.

Vercelli: That's interesting.

Scalione: That's about it, I don't think there was any vineyard on there at all. I know that our ranch didn't have any vineyard until we planted it. And we bordered along side of him there. That was the last that we planted of our vineyard.

Vercelli: Do you remember anything of the Meese Winery, down at Fulton?

Scalione: No.

Vercelli: What did you know about the Greeotts?

Scalione: Just from what my dad [told me about] the Alpine Winery during the conversation we would talk about, in fact, I have a label that John Greeott gave me.

Vercelli: I just found a picture of John Greeott yesterday. I have a picture of him loading his car; with his mustache.

Scalione: He gave me a label and a round silver thing that they used to put on top of the barrels—

Vercelli: They used to put on the barrels, to cover the bung hole.

Scalione: I have one of those things that—did you ever see on of those things they used to chop the thing off the barrel?

Puch: I don't think so.

Vercelli: An adz.

Scalione: Want to see one?

Both: Yes.

Vercelli: I was able to handle that thing as well as I was able to handle a knife and fork.

[And aside conversation concerning museum and wine library creation between Puch and Vercelli, while Scalione gets the adz.]

Vercelli: This is a big one, oh, my gosh. The ones I'm talking about are just about like this. I could never use this one. Louie Coppa could cut one a second, sixty bungs, he would go right down the top there in one crack. He was the most proficient man that I've ever seen. But that is an adz.

Puch: Why do you use it?

Vercelli: Because they stick out a little bit, otherwise they couldn't go in the barrel.

Puch: I see.

Vercelli: They stick out anywhere from a 16th to a 32th of an inch.

Tape Stopped

Vercelli: You're holding an inch and a half valve in your hand. Charlie what did you use it for?

Scalione: This valve, when you are drawing your wine out of your tanks—

Vercelli: Your fermenting tanks?

Scalione: No. Your wine tanks that are full, and you didn't want, it had a regular wooden bung in it, this never stayed on it. And you had to loosen the bung out, now the top bung was tight to make sure it didn't get any air or it would squirt all over you. You loosen that bung and the minute that bung was out, you shoved this faucet, a cock, in there with it opened, and you closed it right off the bat.

Puch: Why wouldn't you put that in before you filled the barrel?

Scalione: It costs you money.

Vercelli: You couldn't afford to have one in every one of your tanks.

Scalione: This [one] was too risky. I'll get you the other one, now the Healdsburg Machine Shop came out with one.

Vercelli: Now, that is a patented valve.

Scalione: That is a patented valve, that took the place of the spring-bunged valve that later came out between that and this spring-bunged valve that stayed in the tank.

Vercelli: Do you have a spring-bunged valve?

Scalione: No, I had some.

Vercelli: We'll have to look, there must be some around. Just for the transition.

Scalione: You know where I saw one? I think we should go get them. At Freemark Abbey. They have the whole thing, with the Healdsburg cap and everything. And this part in here, would stay in the tank, there was a valve on the end. And then you had another thing that you screwed on the front here, which a handle on here, that would shove the value open and this thing here, the wine would come out of here.

Puch: I see.

Scalione: They got this patented, and this was—it had to have a key in there, so nobody could open it—and this stayed in.

Puch: What was the difference between that one and this one? How expensive were they in those days?

Scalione: Ten or fifteen dollars.

Vercelli: Today they probably cost $75.

Scalione: I don't remember.

Vercelli: You probably have a price list somewhere, Charlie.

Scalione: I know I have!

Puch: But this just came out, you couldn't trust it, huh?

Scalione: [Looking for price list] 1938, 550 grape stakes—

Vercelli: Cost how much?

Scalione: Fifteen dollars and thirteen cents.

Vercelli: So that is about $30 a thousand, 3 cents a stake.

Puch: [Looking at tools]

Vercelli: This is a scraper, usually to get cream of tartar off.

Puch: That's a small one, isn't it?

Vercelli: This end would be used on the crevice of the stave, at the head, at the stave you had to get it cleaned out.

Scalione: Hey, a laborer on a crusher, 12 hours at 35¢ an hour.

Vercelli: 1938. Thirty-five cents an hour for a skilled man.

Scalione: A laborer, but skilled. Here's twelve rolls of roofing paper at $1.90 a roll. They are $11 and something right now, for the same roll.

I might have it [price list] in there someplace.

Here we have three special bungs, $10.50. And those were those—

Vercelli: Three fifty.

Puch: Those prices were unbelievable.

Scalione: Toilet paper for 43¢. [Chuckles]

I was hauling machinery, myself, June the 13th, in 1935. Charles Scalione hauling machinery from Asti to the Healdsburg Machine Shop, $10.00.

Puch: High wages at that time.

Scalione: I had records of 1929 of the work done with a caterpillar, with a tractor, how much it worked.

Vercelli: What was the hourly rate?

Scalione: The hourly rate, 35¢ an hour. And down here—

Vercelli: And what year was that, Charlie?

Scalione: 1930. We was paying them two dollars and a half a day.

Puch: Wow.

Scalione: Here we have Joe Marchetti, my wife's brother—here's where I met my wife, her father here, he worked in here. He was getting fifty-three dollars a month.

Puch: At least he was working.

Scalione: What was good wages! Two, two and a half, twenty-five cents an hour.

Tape stopped

Vercelli: Talk about pruning vineyards, I saw Louie Valli at the wake the other night, for Paul Citti. Louie Valli used to prune a thousand vines a day,

at a penny a vine. Make ten dollars a day. And I've never seen someone that could excel him in pruning.

Scalione: Put your glasses on. [Shows him an article] This is my dad.

Vercelli: [Reading] As per our understanding between M. Michael) Scalione, the first party and Charlie Scalione—here Charlie you read it I can't—

Scalione: —The house rents for $18, paid for the period of two years, starting June the first 1944 to June the first 1946 for service rendered to repair the house.

End of Tape

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